entrusted to Mr. Prothero, the Minister of Agriculture, and Sir Richard Winfrey, his Parliamentary Secretary. They were both men who had a thorough practical knowledge of agriculture in all its aspects. As to the distribution and rationing of supplies, I invited Lord Devonport to become the first Food Controller. It was a post for which his long and successful business training as a great food distributor, coupled with his experience in public administration, eminently fitted him. He was the architect of great commercial undertakings dealing with the supply of provisions. He had also been Chairman of the Port of London Authority from 1909. Before that he had been Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade since the end of 1905.

Action of the new Government

The office of Food Controller was one calling for definite executive ability of a high order. Here was no Department which would run smoothly

Complex difficulties

under a mediocre head on the ball-bearings of an expert permanent staff of servants. Someone was needed who would on the one hand take firm and vigorous measures to ensure a sufficient food supply for the needs of the civil population, the armed forces of the Crown, and our Allies on the Continent; and on the other hand, would devise suitable measures of restriction and distribution to make a limited and

of new Department

seemingly inadequate supply stretch out over these demands. It was a double problem, each aspect involving stern interference with some of the most individualistic and conservative industries in the country. The first task involved close co-operation with the Board of Agriculture, Ministry of Shipping, Ministry of National Service and the War Office ;